

Report of Working Groups

Historic Transportation Corridors Conference

Working groups made up of the presenters, moderators, and rapporteurs from the training conference met in San Antonio, TX, after the formal sessions were completed. The purpose of this informal meeting was to develop comments and recommendations, based on the formal presentations, for creating guidelines to include historic transportation corridors in national and state registers, and to recommend consideration by the World Heritage Committee of including historic transportation corridors as part of the initiative to consider historic landscapes for inclusion on the List of World Heritage Sites. These recommendations form the concluding part of the conference on historic transportation corridors (HTCs).

Goals

- Seek a good definition of a historic transportation corridor.
- Use existing mechanisms that work, i.e., definition of national historic trails used in the National Trails System Act, application of National Register criteria for evaluation, etc., to develop an effective framework of national standards for identifying, evaluating, managing, and protecting transportation corridors.
- Explore mechanisms for the protection of historic transportation corridors in a manner that allows for the continued use of the corridor and its supporting elements.

HTCs should be: broadly based; viewed as continuum in time, featuring the changing technologies of travel; delineated by historically-based boundaries, acknowledging the significant aspects of the corridor's setting, viewsheds, etc., as well as intangible qualities such as sounds, smells, etc.; reflective of the multiplicity of resources, cultures, and issues related to the corridor; using inter-disciplinary and multi-cultural approaches to evaluation, commemoration and interpretation.

Proposed Definitions

A series of questions or tests for a definition was suggested:

- Can it accommodate the incredible range of possible HTCs (route, trails, corridor, line, pattern)?
- Does it account for the HTC's broad ranging impacts?
- Does it make clear what a HTC is not?
- Does it account for the HTC's social value and relationship to changing cultural patterns?

An HTC is the linear, character-defining thread that binds together a combination of sites, structures, buildings, districts and objects with a variety of historic, natural and cultural values associated with or directly affected by the corridor along a historic continuum.

An HTC is a travelway of historic significance associated with broad patterns of cultural history and is an identifiable route based upon natural and cultural resources.

An HTC is a linear geographical patterning of cultural use over time containing one or more trails, routes, or travel events and their associated property types, which are integrated with the natural setting and which are associated with the historically significant movement of people, material, ideas, and social values.

HTC Characteristics

Human use or activity is evidenced along historic transportation corridors through the identification and evaluation of a combination of the following possible characteristics:

- Land uses and activities
- Patterns of spatial organization
- Cultural responses to the natural environment
- Circulation networks
- Boundary demarcations
- Landscape architectural features-both formally designed and vernacular or functional
- Associated buildings, structures, districts, sites and objects
- Scenic qualities, vistas, viewsheds, natural features
- Impacts of technology

The sum (totality) of a corridor's parts will be greater (and more significant) than the value of most of its individual parts.

What is the relationship of the parts to the whole? Is there integrity? Is a clear continuum present? Does the corridor's setting (container) demonstrate integrity of place?

Protecting HTCs

While some HTCs may be modest in size, it seems clear that, in general, we are looking at large, complex, multi-owner, multi-use combinations of natural and cultural resources. Such areas will also have multiple layers of cultural significance with diverse meaning to varying populations, and in many parts of our country that significance will be sacred as well as secular.

Devising protection for such areas has always been a challenge, but meeting that challenge will have great rewards because of the potential for preservation of such large-scale structures as HTCs, and the greater potential for involving the public. A tantalizing list of the potential benefits of HTCs has been described beyond those we normally associate with preservation projects; these will be well worth our effort.

Our examination of protection strategies will have to treat government's role with caution. The fiscal resources are not sufficient to permit large scale inter-

vention in such areas, even if such intervention were desirable. And, as has been described, wherever privately-held property is involved, owners will organize to resist any designation of their property, for planning or protection purposes.

Proposals for protection will be key to devising world heritage criteria and nominations. The requirement for controls over listed properties is an obvious challenge in relation to HTC's.

Considerations for Evaluating, Activating, Protecting and Interpreting HTC's

- One or more national theme studies should be conducted to identify potential corridors within a broad national context. (As a prototype, perhaps use the USDOT Bike/Pedestrian study, with component parts submitted by dozens of researchers and groups nationwide.)
- Develop cross-disciplinary, cross-institutional, crossnational coalitions and find funding and technical expertise to support it (them).
- Increase the awareness and information levels on HTC's with articles (CRM, etc.). Be inclusive, international, in several languages.
- Address the potential education and transportation uses of HTC's with an open mind.
- Re-install key transportation elements (such as trolleys and tour boats) as feasible to make corridors come alive.
- Include HTC's as key organizing elements in future national transportation plans.
- Consider the original transportation modes (equipment, experiences, etc.) in planning, interpretation, and future use of HTC's.
- Key importance of interpretation/education/public relations/beginning prior to designation. Try to defuse opposition based on ignorance of the intent and effect of designation.
- "Bottom up" process: discover what people want, including land owners. It is important that residents and business owners feel that the proposal accomplishes goals they want to achieve.
- Early education and public participation can help both to define the corridor and motivate multiple groups in the communities/region to action.
- At "corridor scale," minimum criteria for integrity and protection may vary along the way.
- High potential segment/site management plans: identify critical areas and try to match them with most appropriate protection mechanisms.
- Strengthen available resources from HPF and LWCF and other incentives (e.g., IRS tax incentives) for corridor development.
- Pay attention to vistas/viewsheds both from within and without the corridor.
- Consider appropriateness of public ownership/quasi public ownership, stressing importance of partnerships with private entities and local controls.
- Consider using multiple federal agencies/programs to achieve protection (e.g., BLM, FS, OCZM Coastal Management, etc.).

- Planning must be accompanied by monitoring and evaluating change (GIS, etc.).
- Build in package of incentives for resource assistance and mechanisms to relieve owners from burdens imposed by being designated (e.g., monitoring change and expediting the preparation of environmental reviews/permits) and providing incentives such as technical assistance.
- Acceptable change in corridor will depend on nature of corridor, and what is being protected; the normal way of making preservation judgments may have to be change .
- Recognize the sensitivity of rural landscapes to government agricultural policy, such as price supports and other assistance programs.
- Consider importance of integrating/linking cultural and natural landscapes.

Considerations Concerning World Heritage Standards for Corridors to be so Designated

- Integrity (the whole is greater than the sum of the parts) and protection are the key issues. Protection will be different in long, linear, multi-national corridors (which may eliminate almost all HTC's for now).
- Consider revision of US criteria re: NHL, NPS and National Trail System units for designation of park status. This would aid US commitment of protection if such properties were given World Heritage Site status.
- Consider revision to World Heritage Committee guidelines for protection to allow more flexibility, and means to accomplish protection. This may be necessary given the complex ownership of corridor properties.
- Consider federal/state/local legislative establishment of a commission associated with the corridor area as evidence of protection. The Commission's task would be to protect property by a variety of means.
- As a preliminary exercise, an attempt at identifying potential world heritage class HTC's, with universal value, integrity, and protection was undertaken. (Some felt this was premature and wouldn't nominate any, awaiting a systematic theme study. Others said it was very exclusive and hard to find examples.) Some, however, did come to mind:
 - the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers*
 - the St. Lawrence Seaway
 - the route of the Orient Express
 - the [former] Beringia land bridge
 - the Erie Canal corridor*
 - the Wilderness Road*
 - the Pan American Highway
 - the Inca Road system
 - the Las Vegas strip*
 - the Silk Road

* may be only of national significance